

THE BOOK OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

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FIFTH EDITION

With a Foreword by The Most Reverend
WILLIAM M. SLATTERY, C.M.

(Superior General of the Congregation
of the Mission and the Sisters of Charity)

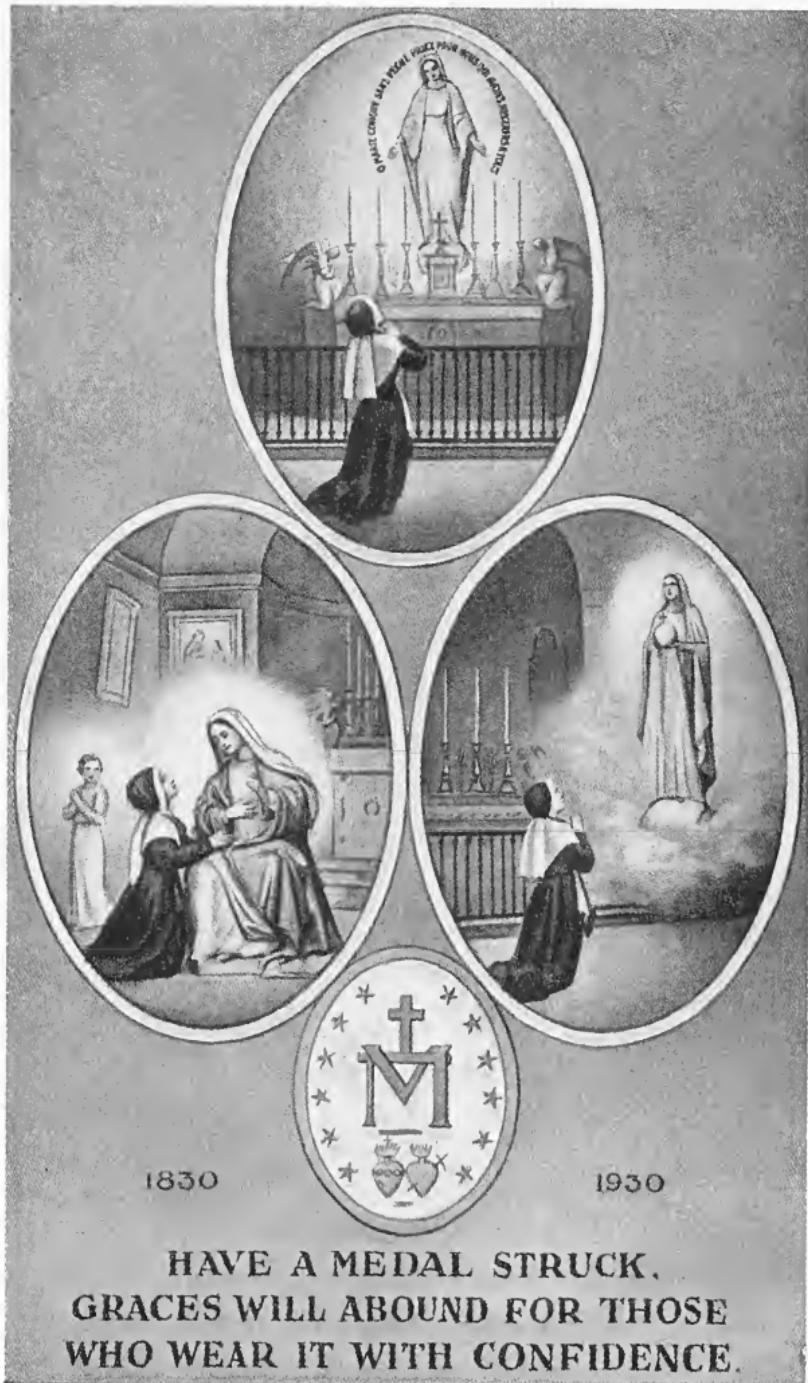
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TO
MARY IMMACULATE
QUEEN
OF
THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL
AND TO
THE LAY APOSTOLATE
CRUSADERS
FOR
THE RIGHTS OF HER SON

<i>First Edition</i>	-	<i>May 1940</i>
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FOREWORD

WE are grateful to the author for providing us with this excellent book. He has, thus, supplied us with a very clear, complete and inspiring history of a beautiful, spiritually-rich and world-wide devotion to our Immaculate Mother. This devotion consists, as the author so well points out, in honouring our Blessed Mother under the title of her Immaculate Conception, in keeping with the directions given by our Blessed Mother herself when she appeared, in 1830, in the Chapel of the Mother-House of the Sisters of Charity, Paris, to a Seminary-Sister, recently canonised, Saint Catherine Labouré. On the occasion of these apparitions, our Blessed Mother ordered that a medal be made and spread abroad according to the model which she then showed, promising special blessings for those who would wear it devoutly. This medal soon became known as the Miraculous Medal because of the wonderful favours received by those who wore it devoutly and who invoked with confidence the intercession of our Blessed Mother.

The author has furnished us not only with a helpful history of the Miraculous Medal and of the devotion to our Blessed Mother under the title of her Immaculate Conception, but also with glowing tributes and with an inspiring account of some of the favours granted those who practise this devotion. He has, moreover, given us a very interesting and useful explanation of the mission of the Medal—particularly its mission of bringing souls closer to our Lord and to our Blessed Mother.

Other valuable features of this book are its explanation of the Association of the Miraculous Medal, its presentation of the Rite of Blessing and Investing with the Miraculous Medal, its "Reflec-

tions on the Medal in Preparation for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception", its method of making the Perpetual Novena in honour of our Blessed Mother of the Miraculous Medal, its Proper for the Masses for the Feasts of 27th November and 28th November, and its Appendix in regard to the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate (of the Miraculous Medal).

We all need the aid of our Blessed Mother. May we not say that in these times there is special need everywhere of her help? We appreciate the various means of showing devotion to our Blessed Mother such as the Rosary, the Litany of Loretto, the Angelus, etc.; we are, indeed, very appreciative of this means which she herself has given us, namely, of showing our devotion to her by wearing the Miraculous Medal and by using the invocation: "O, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee" and by praying to her with great confidence.

This devotion appeals very much to us because it brings us closer to our Lord, because it enables us to show honour to our Blessed Mother who is inexpressibly worthy of our honour, and because it is a source of countless blessings, spiritual and material, for ourselves and for numberless others.

Hence, it is our earnest wish and fervent prayer that this book may have a very wide circulation, so as to help in bringing to as many souls as possible the blessings which our Blessed Mother promised would be given to those who practise this devotion.

WILLIAM M. SLATTERY, C.M.

Superior General

A LETTER TO THE READER

(By Way of Apology)

DEAR READER,

The pages which follow lay no claim whatever to contain an exhaustive or erudite study of the Miraculous Medal and its mission; far from it.

They were compiled rather with the view, first of all, of enticing you to enquire more fully into the meaning of the Apparitions of the Mother of God to Blessed Catherine Labouré in the year 1830; and, secondly, of enabling you to have a more enlightened and practical devotion to the Medal which is the Immaculate Mother's GIFT TO YOU.

If they achieve their object, then, as a little token of gratitude, offer up a prayer from time to time to Mary Immaculate on behalf of

THE COMPILER.

Feast of the Miraculous Medal

27th November, 1939

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PART ONE
HISTORICAL

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- II. THE POWER OF THE MEDAL.
- III. THE MISSION OF THE MEDAL.
- IV. THE APOSTLE OF THE MEDAL.

I

THE HISTORY OF THE MEDAL

"Have a medal struck. . . . Those who wear it will receive great graces."

ON the night of the 18th-19th July, the eve of the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, in the year 1830, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a young novice, Sister Catherine Labouré, in the Chapel of the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity in Paris. Having retired to rest at the usual hour with the other novices, Sister Catherine was awakened at about half-past eleven by a voice which called her by her name three distinct times. Drawing aside the curtain that surrounded her bed, she saw a little child of ravishing beauty, dressed in white and with rays of such dazzling brilliance shining forth from his whole body that they illuminated everything around him. "Come," he said, in a sweet tone of voice, "come to the Chapel; the Blessed Virgin is expecting you." She was alarmed and thought to herself: "If I get up, I shall be heard, I shall be found out." "Do not be afraid," the little child said, as if in answer to her thought; "it is half-past eleven and everybody is asleep; I shall go with you."

Being thus assured and unable to resist the invitation of her heavenly guide, she arose, quickly dressed herself and followed the child who, walking on her left-hand side, cast rays of light wherever he passed. To the great astonishment of the Sister, all the lamps were lighted on the way, and when they reached the Chapel the door opened as soon as her guide touched it with his finger. On entering she found the Altar brilliantly illuminated, which put her in mind, she said, of Midnight Mass.

FIRST APPARITION

Leaving her standing at the altar-rails, the child passed into the Sanctuary. The moments of waiting seemed to her very long; but at about midnight he warned her, saying: "The Blessed Virgin is coming; here she is." Then Sister Catherine heard distinctly on the Epistle side a slight noise like the rustling of a silk dress and saw a Lady of great beauty appear in the Sanctuary and seat herself on the chair which was usually occupied by the Director of the Community. "Following only the emotion of my heart," to quote the Sister's own words, "I threw myself on my knees at the Blessed Virgin's feet and placed my hands familiarly on her lap, as I would have done with my own mother. At that moment I felt the sweetest emotion that I have ever experienced; it would be impossible for me to find words to express

it. . . . I am unable to state how long I remained with the Blessed Virgin; all I know is that after speaking with me for a long time she went away, vanishing like a shadow." Sister Catherine then arose from her knees and found the child standing in the place where she had left him when she went to the Blessed Virgin. He said to her: "She has gone"; and placing himself again at her left-hand side, led her back to the dormitory, while still radiating a heavenly brightness. "I believe," she tells us, "that this child was my Guardian Angel, because I had prayed often to him to obtain for me the favour of seeing the Blessed Virgin. . . . Having gone back to bed, I heard the clock strike two, but I did not go to sleep again."

Sister Catherine made known afterwards to her confessor, Father Aladel, C.M., that our Blessed Lady spoke to her about many matters during the course of this Apparition. She referred to the evils of the day and predicted the misfortunes which were to overwhelm France, but promised that she would watch over the two Families of St. Vincent de Paul.¹ She ordered her to transmit to her Director certain recommendations concerning the Community of the Sisters of Charity. Above all she made special reference to the great mission which she was to

¹ The fulfilment of these predictions and promises was a confirmatory proof of the reality of the Apparition.

entrust to her. "My child," she said, "I have a mission to entrust to you. You will have much to suffer in its performance, but the thought that it will be for the glory of God will enable you to overcome all trials. You will be opposed, but do not be afraid. Grace will be given to you. Tell all that takes place within you with simplicity and confidence. You will see certain things. You will receive inspirations in prayer. Give an account of everything to him who has the care of your soul."

SECOND APPARITION

The Apparition of the night of the 18th-19th July was but a preparation for the more important, and now famous, Apparition which took place towards the end of the same year. On the 27th November our Blessed Lady appeared again to the young novice. Let us listen to the account of it as told by Sister Catherine:

"At half-past five in the evening; whilst making my meditation in the Chapel, I heard a noise on the right-hand side of the Sanctuary like the rustling of silk; looking up, I saw the Blessed Virgin standing near the picture of St. Joseph. She was of medium height, and her face was indescribably beautiful. She was dressed in a high gown with long plain sleeves; her head was covered with a white veil which, without hiding her features, flowed down to

her feet. Both gown and veil were of that golden-white hue with which all are familiar who are accustomed to see the sunrise. Her hair was confined in a sort of fillet trimmed with narrow lace. The colour of her garments was that of the sky at dawn. Her feet rested on a globe or, rather, on one-half of a globe, for this was all I could see. Her hands, which were on a level with her waist, held another smaller globe. Her eyes were raised to Heaven and her face was beaming with light whilst she offered this globe to Our Lord.

"Suddenly her fingers were covered with rings inset with precious stones; rays of dazzling light darted from them on all sides and enveloped her figure in such brilliance that I could no longer see either her feet or her robe. As I was gazing at her, the Blessed Virgin fixed her eyes on me, and I heard an interior voice in my heart, which said: 'This globe represents the world and in particular France, and also every individual soul.' It is beyond my power to give any idea of the splendour and brilliance of those rays. Then the Blessed Virgin said: 'Behold the symbol of the graces which I will shower down on all who ask me for them.' This made me understand how generous she is to those who pray to her, and how many precious graces she grants to those who ask her for them. At this moment I cannot tell whether I was alive or dead; all I know is that I was

very happy. After a while an oval frame surrounded the Blessed Virgin, on which were written, in letters of gold, the words: ‘O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!’ ”

The little globe now disappeared and our Blessed Lady’s hands, filled with the graces which the rays symbolised, were lowered and gracefully extended by her sides. “I heard a voice,” to resume Sister Catherine’s narrative, “which said to me: ‘Have a medal struck according to this model. Those who wear it, when indulged, will receive great graces, especially if they wear it around the neck. There will be graces in abundance for all who wear it with confidence.’ At the same instant it seemed to me as if the oval frame turned round, and I could see on the reverse side the letter ‘M’ surmounted by a cross, with a bar beneath, and under the monogram the Hearts of Jesus and His Mother, the one surrounded with a crown of thorns, the other pierced by a sword.” The Apparition then disappeared. When questioned later on concerning the design of the Medal in detail, Sister Catherine stated that the cross, the letter “M,” and the two Hearts were enclosed in a frame of twelve stars.

THIRD APPARITION

Shortly before the end of the year Sister Catherine was favoured with yet another Apparition which

was almost identical with that of the 27th November. It took place again in the Sanctuary of the Chapel, and at the same hour. On this occasion, however, instead of remaining near the picture of St. Joseph, the Blessed Virgin passed before it and stood behind the Tabernacle in the position now occupied by her statue. Once more she revealed every detail of the design of the Medal; once more she commissioned her humble agent to have the Medal struck and distributed throughout the entire world. Sister Catherine concludes her account of this Apparition in the following words: "To state what I learnt when the Blessed Virgin was offering the globe to Our Lord is simply impossible. While I was gazing upon her I heard a voice in my heart, which said: 'These rays are the symbol of the graces which the Blessed Virgin obtains for all those who ask her for them.' Then everything disappeared . . . and I was left full of joy and consolation."

PROPAGATION OF THE MEDAL

When Father Aladel, Sister Catherine's confessor, heard from her of this extraordinary mission, he acted with the greatest prudence and caution; in fact—at least so it seemed to his penitent—with even coldness and indifference. He turned a deaf ear to her repeated requests to have the Medal made and told her to try to forget all about it. To do this was

impossible, for the Blessed Virgin kept her constantly in mind of her mission and complained of her negligence in putting it into execution. Eventually, Father Aladel, realising that the Mother of God was displeased, not so much with the humble and submissive Sister as with himself, went to Monsignor de Quelen, Archbishop of Paris, and secured his approval for the striking of the Medal. "There is nothing in this contrary to the approved practice of the Church," declared the Archbishop. "The Medal will spread devotion to Mary; it will strengthen belief in her Immaculate Conception. Go ahead with it." Thus assured, he immediately set about his task.

On the 30th June, 1832, the first consignment of Medals was ready. What must have been Sister Catherine's enthusiasm and delight when she received the first Medal into her hand! In a transport of holy joy, she exclaimed: "Now it must be propagated!" Its propagation was truly prodigious. Not only in Paris and all the Provinces of France, but in every part of the Catholic universe, the Faithful wanted to get the Medal. It was sent everywhere: to Belgium, Spain, Great Britain and Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, to the Missions of the Levant and China, and to the United States of America. The readiness with which it was received made the demands for it so great that, in order to meet them,

the Medal was struck in several towns of France, and even abroad. There were eleven manufacturers in Paris, four in Lyons, others in Bordeaux, Toulouse, Marseilles, Liége, Rome, Turin, Naples, London. . . . M. Vachette of Paris, who made the first Medals, was working incessantly. Between June of 1832 and March of 1836 his workshops alone turned out 2,247,238 Medals—the majority in copper, about 75,000 in silver, and 200 in gold. According to Father Coste, the renowned Vincentian historian, the number of Medals distributed before 1836 certainly exceeded twelve millions.¹ The number in circulation at the present day is beyond all reckoning.

ECCLESIASTICAL APPROBATION

In due time, after careful and searching enquiry, the reality of the Apparitions and the divine origin of the Medal were confirmed by the Church. In 1836 a Commission of Enquiry, which had been canonically set up by the Archbishop of Paris, reported in favour of the supernatural origin of the Medal. Some years later Rome gave her official

¹ This must be a very conservative estimate. Rev. Lucien Misermont, C.M., in *L'Âme de la Bienheureuse Catherine Labouré*, states that in the ten years from 1832 to 1842 the House of Vachette sold 20,000,000 Medals, while during that period each of the eleven manufacturers at Paris and of the four at Lyons turned out the same quantity. He bases his statement on statistics given in the eighth edition of the *Notice Historique* of the Medal published by Father Aladel in 1842.

approval. In 1894 Leo XIII instituted a Feast in commemoration of "The Manifestation of the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal," with proper Office and Mass, to be celebrated annually on the 27th November in all Oratories and Churches attached to the Houses of the Vincentian Fathers and of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.¹ In the following year a special rite for blessing and investing with the Medal was inserted in the Roman Ritual. (See p. 72.) Many Indulgences were also granted for all the Faithful who wear the Medal. (See p. 69.)

On the 8th July, 1909, Pius X formally approved of the erection of a pious Association of the Miraculous Medal in honour of the Immaculate Conception "as a living and perpetual memorial of the Manifestation of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in the year 1830, during which the Virgin herself showed the model of this Medal." Membership of the Association is open to all the Faithful of both sexes, so that every person who is invested with the Medal by an approved priest and according to the approved form thereby enjoys all its rich Indulgences and Privileges. (See pp. 63-69.)

¹ By making application to Rome, Bishops may obtain for their dioceses, and Major Superiors for their Religious Communities, the privilege (as stated in the Office of the Feast) of celebrating this Feast annually.

CENTENARY OF THE MEDAL

From the 19th July, 1930, to the 19th July, 1931, the Centenary of the Apparitions and of the Medal was solemnised in every part of the world. These solemnities were attended with the greatest enthusiasm and fervour; they gave further prominence to the Medal and its mission. In Germantown, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., on Monday, the 8th December, 1930, a perpetual Novena in honour of the Miraculous Medal was inaugurated at the Central Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, and continued on *every Monday* during the year. It met with such astonishing success that priests in neighbouring Churches sought and obtained permission to begin the Novena in their parishes. This new phase of devotion to the Medal spread not only throughout the United States of America, but also into Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, India, and China. To-day the Novena is conducted in over two thousand Churches, and in many of them more than once in the day.¹

The Centenary Year was brought to a close with great solemnity by His Holiness Pope Pius XI on the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, July 19th, 1931. On that day, the anniversary of the first Apparition of the Blessed Virgin in the Chapel of the Rue du Bac,

¹ It is conducted on every Monday night, to crowded congregations, in about fifty Churches of the Archdiocese of Dublin.

For the Novena Prayers, see p 92.

the Decree proclaiming the heroism of the virtues of the Venerable Servant of God, Sister Catherine Labouré, was read in the presence of the Holy Father, Cardinal Laurenti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and representatives of the two Families of St. Vincent. This solemn act was but a fitting conclusion to yet another hundred years in the history of God's merciful interventions on behalf of mankind, in which Sister Catherine Labouré and the Miraculous Medal played a by no means insignificant part.

II

THE POWER OF THE MEDAL

"The diffusion of this Miraculous Medal appears to Us most marvellous. By means of it, God has been most generous in working countless miracles from the beginning of its propagation up to the present day."—*Pius XI.*

If the history of the conquests made by means of the Medal during the past century were written, it would fill volumes. No sooner were the first Medals made and distributed than the marvellous efficacy of Mary's gift became manifest. It proved itself to be so instrumental in obtaining, through the intercession of the Immaculate Mother, such signal cures and conversions that it was immediately and universally acclaimed as "Miraculous." From every side came in reports of most remarkable happenings. Diseases of every kind, many of them all but incurable, disappeared with the application of the Medal—leprosy, tuberculosis, insanity, dropsy, epilepsy, fractures. . . . In the spiritual order there was the same supernatural intervention: Protestants, Jews, apostates, and unbelievers embraced the true Faith; Freemasons renounced their sect; the most hardened sinners abandoned the evil tenor of their ways. Moreover, the Medal became a buckler against

attack and a safeguard in shipwreck and accidents. Father Aladel endeavoured to keep a record of these miracles, many of which were proved juridically. The task was beyond him; they were too numerous.

GLOWING TRIBUTES

But the fame of those wonderful events and extraordinary favours spread far and wide throughout the Church and evoked many tributes of gratitude to our Blessed Lady and of praise and admiration for her Medal. Perhaps the noblest and most striking of these devout tributes is that paid by Archbishop Ullathorne in his classical treatise on "The Immaculate Conception."¹ He writes as follows:

"The Miraculous Medal, in these latter days, has been the favourite symbol of devotion to the Immaculate Conception. . . . It has acquired the name of *Miraculous*, one can scarcely say how, though it is easy to tell why. But, except for the holy Cross, no other Christian symbol was ever so widely multiplied, or was ever the instrument of so many marvellous results. It has been in use just a quarter of a century, and countless have been the favours, the graces, the preservations, the conversions, the miraculous interpositions, of

¹ *The Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God*. First published in 1855. Art and Book Co., London.

which it has been the occasion. Blind, indeed, is that child of the Church who has lived through this period and failed to recognise the benedictions which flowed in upon the faithful through the invocation of this mystery and the pious use of this symbol."

In our own days, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, the late Pope Pius XI of revered memory, bore testimony to the fact that "the whole world has been filled with miracles due to the holy Medal which, with reason, has been styled Miraculous." ". . . The diffusion of this Miraculous Medal," he declared, "appears to Us most marvellous. By means of it, God has been most generous in working countless miracles from the beginning of its propagation up to the present day."

His illustrious successor, Pope Pius XII, has stated, in no less laudable terms, that "the whole world was submerged under a deluge of little medals which were the bearers of all the spiritual and corporal mercies of the Immaculate. . . . The Medal, struck by the thousands in every country and clime, has been the instrument of such manifold and extraordinary favours, corporal as well as spiritual, of so many cures, protections and above all of conversions that the voice of the people without any hesitation forthwith called it 'the Miraculous Medal.' "

CONVERSION OF RATISBONNE

To give a detailed account of even a few of these supernatural prodigies which have merited for the Medal of the Immaculate Conception the title of *Miraculous* would be beyond the scope of this little book. We can here but tell over again the well-known incident of the conversion, in January, 1842, of Alphonsus Ratisbonne, the facts of which have been embodied in the Lessons of the Second Nocturn of the Office for the Feast of the Medal.

Alphonsus Ratisbonne, a Jew of Strasbourg, was young, highly connected, very accomplished, and wealthy. He held tenaciously to his Israelite convictions and had the greatest contempt for Christianity, a contempt that had deepened into hatred through the conversion of his brother, Theodore.¹ He was engaged to a rich and accomplished young lady of his own race. Previously, however, to his marriage, he had set out on a tour of Europe. In the course of his travels he came to Rome, drawn, as he admitted later on, by some irresistible force. While there he met, by chance, Mons. de Bussières, a pious Catholic gentleman and friend, who prevailed upon him to accept and wear around his neck a Miraculous

¹ At the time of his brother's conversion, Father Theodore Ratisbonne was Sub-Director of the Archconfraternity in honour of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners, established in the Church of Our Lady of Victories in Paris. (See p. 46.)

Medal, and also to recite daily the "Memorare" of St. Bernard. Alphonsus acceded to his friend's wishes through condescension, not through conviction, according to his own testimony: "Just to let you see that we Jews are not obstinate, and because you are my friend."

A few days later, they entered together the Church of Sant' Andrea delle Fratte. Mons. de Bussières went to the Sacristy to interview the parish priest, and while he was there, Ratisbonne passed the time by taking a look around the church. Suddenly the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, just as she is depicted on the Medal. She did not speak, but signed to him with her hand, and he fell upon his knees. In a few moments he arose a changed man. He had entered, completely ignorant of the doctrines of Christianity; he went out, fully instructed in all the truths of the Catholic Faith. "Suddenly," he writes, "I no longer saw anything, or rather I saw only one thing. How would it be possible to speak of it! There I was prostrate, bathed in tears, when Mons. de Bussières recalled me to life. I could not answer his hasty questions; but at last I seized the Medal which I carried on my breast; I tenderly kissed the image of the Virgin. . . . Oh! it was indeed she! I experienced such a complete change that I believed myself to be another person. I felt in myself something solemn and sacred that forced me to ask for a priest. . . . On entering the

Church I was ignorant of everything; on leaving I saw clearly. If one cannot explain physical light, how can one explain the light which is fundamentally but Truth itself?"

The new convert was brought to Father de Villefort, S.J. He made a Retreat, was baptized, and later on ordained a priest. He entered, eventually, the Community of Our Lady of Sion, which had been founded by his brother, Father Theodore Ratisbonne, for the conversion of the Jews. He died in the Holy Land, in 1884, after a life of most exemplary holiness and zeal. Before his death he erected an Ex-voto Chapel in 3 Rue Oudinot, Paris, in thanksgiving for his miraculous conversion.

The news of this remarkable conversion filled the Eternal City with excitement and joy. From Rome it travelled quickly throughout Christendom and made a most profound impression everywhere. On the order of the Cardinal Vicar, an ecclesiastical tribunal was forthwith set up to verify the fact. It declared that "the instantaneous and complete conversion" of Alphonsus Ratisbonne was a "true and signal miracle . . . wrought . . . through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

Visitors to this Church of Sant' Andrea may see in the chapel of the Miracle a painting representing the Miraculous Apparition, with the following inscription in both Italian and French:

On the Twentieth of January, 1842,
Alphonsus Ratisbonne, of Strasbourg,
Came here, an obstinate Jew.
The Virgin appeared to him,
As you here see.
Falling down a Jew,
He rose up a Christian.

Stranger,
Store up this precious remembrance
Of the mercy of God
And the power of the Virgin.

NECESSITY OF PRAYER

The phenomenal success of the Medal was due, undoubtedly, to the fact that through its miraculous agency the Immaculate Virgin manifested everywhere her power and goodness. The wearing of the Medal or its application was in itself an act of faith in her intercessory power. But when in addition to this, recourse was had to her in earnest supplication on behalf of some particular person, then, indeed, did her intercession appear most admirable. In no instance is this more evident than in the conversion of Ratisbonne, who was induced to recite daily the "Memorare," and was joined in its recitation by his friends.¹ The Miraculous Medal "recalls to us," said Pope Pius XI, "that all things, even miracles,

¹ The words of the "Memorare" so impressed themselves on his mind that he could not get rid of them. "They pursued me unceasingly," he said; "I repeated them continually, like a musical tune, which makes one impatient, but which cannot be got out of the ear."

are promised in answer to prayer." Prayer, confident and filial prayer to the most powerful and Immaculate Virgin, would seem, therefore, to be an essential and almost indispensable condition of successful intervention on the part of the Medal in favour of all who make use of it.

It may be of interest to mention here the references made to prayer by the Blessed Virgin in the course of the Apparitions. When preparing Sister Catherine for her mission and warning her of the opposition with which she would meet, our Blessed Lady said: "Come to the foot of this Altar; there graces will be showered on you and on all who *shall ask for them*, whether they be rich or poor. . . . Special graces will be given to those who *ask for them*, but people *must pray, must pray a great deal*." Again when revealing the design of the Medal and explaining the symbolism of the rays which streamed forth from her hands, she said: "Behold these rays; they are the symbol of the graces which I will shower down on all who *ask me for them!*" When on this occasion Sister Catherine noticed that some of the precious stones on our Blessed Lady's fingers emitted no rays, she was given to understand that "these stones are symbolic of the graces for which people *forget to ask her*." Finally, there appeared in letters of gold the invocation: "*O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!*"

III

THE MISSION OF THE MEDAL

"Just as, after the definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Immaculate Virgin showed herself to Bernadette Soubirous; so, before the definition and as a preparation for it, Mary likewise manifested herself to Catherine Labouré."—*Decree on Heroism of the Virtues of Catherine Labouré.*

THE Immaculate Conception is a truth as old as Christianity itself. From the beginning it was always the pious belief "of the Faithful of Christ concerning His Most Blessed Mother the Virgin Mary that her soul, in the first instant of creation and infusion into the body, was by a special grace and privilege of God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ her Son, the Redeemer of Mankind, preserved free from the stain of original sin."¹ This doctrine is "pointed out in the Sacred Scriptures, according to the judgment of the Fathers, handed down in so many mighty testimonies of the same, expressed and celebrated in so many illustrious monuments of a revered antiquity, and proposed and with great piety confirmed by the greatest and highest judgment

¹ Alexander VII, Dec., 1661.

of the Church. . . . Moreover, from ancient times, the bishops of the Church, ecclesiastics, and even emperors and kings themselves have earnestly entreated of the Apostolic See that the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God should be proclaimed as a Dogma of Catholic Faith."¹

THE SIGN FROM HEAVEN

But such solemn pronouncement by the infallible authority of the Church was to be deferred until the day which God in His eternal designs had decreed. As St. Leonard of Port Maurice had pointed out to Benedict XIV, "of necessity there must first be a ray of light descending from on high. And if that ray of light does not descend, it is a sign that the time marked out by Providence has not arrived." It was in the year 1830 that the ray of light descended on a world seated in darkness in the very person of the Immaculate Virgin herself, who manifested herself to a young novice, Sister Catherine Labouré, in the Chapel of the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity in Paris, and commanded her to have a medal struck in honour of her Immaculate Conception.

The French Revolution, coming so swiftly after that already accomplished in America, had caused a social and religious upheaval not only in France,

¹ *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pius IX, Dec., 1854.

but also throughout the entire civilised world. A great wave of materialism and naturalism, which followed in its wake, ruthlessly swept away the traditions of the past, with the result that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Sanctuary had been laid waste. Man had turned away from God, and God, it seemed to many, had rejected and forsaken His people. However, just as in the case of our First Parents the eternal Father had a plan in readiness whereby He would undo the harm brought on the human race by the Fall and counteract the calamitous effects of original sin, so now He was to come once more to the rescue of His wayward children in a way that bears a very striking analogy to the plan enunciated in the Garden of Eden and put into execution at Bethlehem and Calvary. The head of the serpent was once again to be crushed by a great revival of devotion to the Mother of the Redeemer, especially to the unique privilege of her Immaculate Conception. The Mother was to be again glorified for the sake of the Son. And as the Almighty had chosen from all eternity the humble Virgin of Nazareth to be the Woman from whom the God-Man was to take flesh and be born, so now He "chose the humble Catherine, through the medium of Mary, to lavish His mercies on mankind and to awaken among Christian peoples a livelier sense of devotion to the Immaculate

Conception."¹ The little Medal, the design of which the Blessed Virgin revealed to Sister Catherine and which she commanded her to have made and distributed throughout the world, was to be the means of attracting the minds of men, first to the Mother, then to the Son, and finally of bringing them back to the service of their Creator and the faithful practice of their religious duties.

REVIVAL OF DEVOTION

The Medal, struck according to our Blessed Lady's own design, bore the figure of the Immaculate, crushing under her heel the serpent's head, and the invocation: *O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!* It was distributed in almost countless millions; it wrought innumerable miracles. It became the favourite symbol of devotion to the Immaculate Conception and, in a few years, led to a situation which must be unique in the history of the Church. In all parts of Christendom thousands of Catholics, and indeed many non-Catholics, were wearing day and night an actual material symbol of a Mystery of Faith, upon which the infallible authority of the Church had not as yet pronounced. The prayer: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!"

¹ Decree on Heroism of the Virtues of the Venerable Servant of God, Catherine Labouré. July, 1931.

was everywhere repeated, in almost every known tongue, and ascended like a sweet-smelling incense from the hearts of the just and of sinners to the throne of God's Mother. In this way the Medal proved to be instrumental in hastening on the definition of the Dogma and preparing the way for the Apparitions at Lourdes.

PETITIONS TO ROME

In 1832, Mgr. de Quelen, Archbishop of Paris, gave verbal approbation for the manufacture and propagation of the Medal; he saw herein a means of "spreading devotion to Mary and strengthening belief in her Immaculate Conception." A Commission of Enquiry, set up by him in 1836, to investigate the authenticity of the Apparitions, declared in favour of the divine origin of the Medal. Moreover, the Promoter was so struck with the already remarkable influence and efficacy of the Medal in every part of the world, that he had no hesitation in stating that the principal object of the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin seemed to be the increase of devotion to her Immaculate Conception, and that the Medal was instrumental in bringing this about. Two years later, the Archbishop obtained from Gregory XVI permission to solemnise the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on the second Sunday in Advent, to insert in the Preface of the

Mass the words: *Et te in Immaculata Conceptione;* and then, in the following year, to include in the Litany of Loreto the invocation: *Queen conceived without original sin, pray for us!* Shortly before his death, in 1839, he consecrated the Archdiocese of Paris to Mary Immaculate and enthroned a statue of the Immaculate Conception in the Cathedral of Nôtre-Dame. Other Prelates and Heads of Religious Orders followed the noble lead of the Archbishop, in whose diocese the Apparitions had taken place. According to Perrone, before 1847, at least three hundred applications were sent to Rome for the liturgical privileges of inserting the word *Immaculate* in the Preface of the Mass of the Conception and the petition, "Queen conceived without original sin," in the Litany of Loreto. Gregory XVI most gladly granted these favours, so "that thus the rule of faith should be established by the rule itself of supplication."¹ He had a personal devotion to the Medal; he kept one always by the foot of his crucifix in his own private study, and presented visitors with a Miraculous Medal as a mark of esteem. Meanwhile, men distinguished for their learning and piety earnestly advocated in their writings the definition of the Dogma, and petitions for such a pronouncement flowed into Rome from all over the world.

¹ *Ineffabilis Deus.*

INVESTIGATION BY PIUS IX

Pius IX will ever be remembered in the history of the Church as the Pope of the Immaculate Conception. Called to the chair of St. Peter in the year 1846, he was driven into exile two years afterwards by revolutionary forces. Yet, in the very midst of overwhelming calamities and away from the Eternal City, his love for our Blessed Lady and desire to proclaim her most exalted privilege were foremost in his thoughts. He instituted a judicial and searching investigation into the whole belief and practice of the Church in regard to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. "From his exile at Gæta, he sent Encyclical Letters, dated the 2nd February, 1849, to all the bishops of the Catholic world, in which he called upon them to signify to him, in writing, what was the piety and devotion of their flocks towards the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, and especially what the bishops themselves thought about promulgating the definition, or what they desired." Replies were received from over six hundred Prelates, who, "with an incredible joyfulness, gladness and zeal, not only confirmed their own singular piety and that of their clergy and faithful people towards the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, but even entreated of him with a common voice

that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin should be defined by his supreme judgment and authority.”¹

“No General Council,” writes Archbishop Ullathorne, “ever brought out so universal an expression of the Catholic Episcopacy on a question of doctrine as that brought out by the Encyclical of Pius IX. Each bishop, calmly seated in his diocese, with its influence around him, wrote deliberately down the tradition of his See, the sense of his clergy and people, and his own doctrinal judgment. And thus, whilst in a Council a part of the Episcopate alone can be present in person, and the rest by representation, in this case each bishop spoke in person, and the voice of the Catholic Church was found to be unanimous.”² It would have been surprising had it been otherwise, for, with the Miraculous Medal, pious belief in this ineffable Mystery had grown and spread so rapidly and widely that there was, at that time, scarcely a place on earth in which recourse was not had, with the liveliest faith and tenderest devotion, to “Mary, conceived without sin.”

DEFINITION OF DOGMA

After hearing the opinion of the College of Cardinals and the theological consultors who had

¹ Ibid.

² *The Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God.*

studied carefully every aspect of the question, and when Masses and prayers had been offered up in every part of the world, the Holy Father decided that the opportune time had come for proclaiming the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God as a Dogma of the Catholic Faith. God had spoken. The bishops and their flocks had spoken. Rome was now to speak, and speak definitively.

On the 8th December, 1854, to the joy of the Blessed in Heaven and the exultation of the Faithful on earth, Pope Pius IX, amidst the breathless silence of a vast congregation of Cardinals, Prelates, priests and people, raised his voice in the great Basilica of St. Peter's, and, with his face bathed in tears, solemnly defined that:

“It is a Dogma of Faith that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her Conception, by a singular privilege and grace of God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the Human Race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin.”¹

Addressing the people of Rome in the year 1894, on the occasion of the institution of the Feast of the Manifestation of the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal, the Cardinal Vicar of Rome said: “The Manifestation with which the humble novice of the Mother House of the Sisters

¹ *Ineffabilis Deus.*

of Charity in Paris was favoured in 1830 is connected by the closest bonds with the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. . . . The attitude of the Virgin, as she appeared to the happy child of St. Vincent de Paul, trampling the head of the serpent under her feet, and the beautiful prayer, taught by the Virgin herself and engraved on the Miraculous Medal: 'O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!', expressed a doctrine in harmony with the aspirations of all generations of Catholics, and was the affirmation of a truth divinely revealed and which was later on to become a Dogma of Faith."¹

LOURDES

Thus the Miraculous Medal had, in less than a quarter of a century, achieved the primary purpose of its mission; it had hastened on the explicit and authoritative proclamation of a doctrine which had always been implicitly held in the Church. Such an achievement, however, was not the final act in this ever memorable drama. The Immaculate Mother would give a visible sign of her pleasure at her children's fidelity, and her benign appreciation of their loving devotion. She would appear again on earth, not this time in the Chapel of the Rue du Bac,

¹ *The Miraculous Medal and Lourdes*, Rev. J. F. Carr, C.M.

but in a little village picturesquely situated at the foot of the Pyrenees. In the year 1858 she appeared at Lourdes. Just as she had manifested herself to Catherine Labouré in preparation for the Dogma of her Immaculate Conception, so now she showed herself to Bernadette Soubirous in thanksgiving for it. When little Bernadette in her child-like simplicity asked her who she was, she replied, in a voice of indefinable emotion: "*I am the Immaculate Conception.*"¹ The Apparitions at Lourdes and the miraculous fountain of water which springs perpetually from the rock of Massabielle are an expression of, and abiding testimony to, the heartfelt gratitude of the Virgin Mother to her children on earth for their wonderful profession of faith in the sinlessness and perfect purity of her soul from the very first instant of her Conception.

All pilgrims should, if possible, pay a visit to the Chapel of the Apparitions in Paris² before proceeding

¹ Thrice she made her request, and at first the Lady only smiled. After the third request the Lady, who had held her hands joined till then, let them fall to her sides in the attitude of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, and then joined them again to her breast. Then she raised her eyes . . . and said: "I am the Immaculate Conception." — *Bernadette of Lourdes*, by Father Martindale, S.J.

² By writing in advance, Directors of Pilgrimages may secure permission to visit this Shrine. The Immaculate Mother extends to all her children the invitation which she gave to Saint Catherine: "Come to the foot of this Altar; there graces will be showered on you and on all who shall ask for them, whether they be rich or poor." Address: 140 rue du Bac, Paris, VII.

to the Shrine at Lourdes, for the scene of the opening chapter of the history of Lourdes is placed in the Rue du Bac. When Bernadette heard the words: "I am the Immaculate Conception," she was wearing a Miraculous Medal—that Medal which the Sisters of Charity had been distributing far and wide since 1832, and which had been instrumental, in the designs of Providence, in bringing about the solemn definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

REVIVAL OF RELIGION

While securing with such marked success the primary purpose of its mission, the Medal had not been neglecting its secondary and no less important one. This pious object and the prayer engraved on it—in itself a real act of faith in the Mother of God conceived without sin—were the means of reawakening in the minds and hearts of men a realisation of their noble vocation and destiny, and thus restoring them to the service of their Creator. With the revival of devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin there was at the same time a great revival of Religion; the one followed the other as effect follows cause. Veneration of the Mother led naturally to worship of the Son. For the resounding miracles wrought through the Medal of the Immaculate Conception pointed to the Blessed

Fruit of the Virgin's womb, to Him Who formerly worked all manner of miracles in proof of His Divinity and on behalf of sinners. Indeed, this would really seem to be the true purpose of the Manifestation of the holy and Immaculate Virgin to Sister Catherine Labouré. It was by no mere coincidence that the Apparitions took place in the Sanctuary of the Chapel, near the Sacramental Presence. Clearly she sought not her own glory, but rather that of her Son. The time had come when, to quote Cardinal Newman, "her glory was necessary for His." "So when His Name was dishonoured," he wrote, "she forthwith was filled with zeal; when Emmanuel was denied, the Mother came forward; the Mother threw her arms around her Son, and let herself be honoured in order to secure His Throne."¹

Dignitaries of the Church testified to the fact that the Medal was an instrument in the designs of Providence for this very end. Just as in the days of St. Dominic the devout recitation of the Rosary brought victory over heresy, so now the marvellous diffusion of the Miraculous Medal brought with it a revival of Faith and a re-awakening of fervour. Man was coming back to God through the gentle and all-powerful mediation of Mary Immaculate.

¹ Sermon on *The Glories of Mary for the sake of her Son*, 1849. On August 22nd, 1845, Newman had hung a Miraculous Medal round his neck. On October 9th he was received into the Church. Cf. *The Life of Newman* by Robert Sencourt.

OUR LADY OF VICTORIES

One of the many instances recorded of this religious revival was the transformation of the parish of Our Lady of Victories in Paris, in the year 1830. This parish was situated in the very heart of commercial Paris, and included within its boundaries many of the well-known places of amusement, as well as, alas, resorts of evil. No Sacraments were administered in it, even to the dying; and the Church was deserted, even on the most solemn Feasts. The Parish Priest, the Abbé Desgenettes, whose name like that of the Church of Our Lady of Victories is now famous, was heart-broken. All the means which his priestly zeal could suggest to change this deplorable state of things had failed. What should he do, he asked himself; should he resign from his pastoral charge? With his mind in this perplexed state of doubt and despondency, he was saying Mass at the Altar of Our Lady on the Feast of St. Francis Xavier when, after the Sanctus, a voice within him clearly said: "Consecrate your parish to the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary"! Here at last was the solution of his problem! Why had he never thought of it, for he had a great devotion to the Miraculous Medal?¹

¹ The Abbé Desgenettes was in charge of the Parish of St. Francis Xavier in 1830. As the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity was situated in this parish, he was one of the first to hear the glad news of the Apparitions.

FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS

Immediately after his thanksgiving he set to work. He now saw clearly what was wanted, and there and then drew up rules for a pious association in honour of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners, with the Miraculous Medal as its badge. The Archbishop of Paris approved of the Statutes and the canonical erection of the Confraternity. The first meeting was held on Sunday, the 11th December. To the astonishment and joy of the Pastor, it was attended by close on five hundred people, and among the number a great many men. To each he gave a Miraculous Medal, with the exhortation to recite frequently the invocation engraved on it. The reform had begun. Soon the parish of Our Lady of Victories became one of the most pious in Paris, and the Church one of the most celebrated Sanctuaries of Christendom; they enjoy this reputation to the present day. In April 1838, Gregory XVI elevated the Confraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners to the dignity of an Archconfraternity, with power to affiliate associations of the same name and purpose. At the time of the death of the Abbé Desgenettes, in 1860, the Archconfraternity had 15,000 affiliated branches with a total

membership of over twenty millions. To-day, the number of branches exceeds 25,000.¹

CATHOLIC ACTION

Through the instrumentality of the Medal, a new season of grace and prodigy was opened on earth. The gift of Mary Immaculate was the occasion of countless conversions among all classes of people and in all parts of the world. By reviving the slowly dying embers of faith and piety, rekindling a fervent religious spirit and stirring up true Christian zeal, it brought victory for the Church Militant over the destructive forces of evil then so prevalent in the world. The Medal was undoubtedly an instrument of the Apostolate, an efficacious means of bringing Christ and His Gospel into the minds and hearts of mankind through the intercession of the Immaculate Mother and its own miraculous power. It secured the triumph of Jesus through Mary. Furthermore, it led to concerted action on the part of Catholics, who banded themselves together under the leadership of their bishops and priests in such organisations as the Archconfraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners, the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate,

¹ Every member of the Catholic Young Men's Society in Ireland is a member of the Archconfraternity, and is invested with the Miraculous Medal.

and the Association of the Miraculous Medal, all of which have been acknowledged by Popes, from Gregory XVI to Pius XII, to be a source of untold blessings for the Church. The Medal, which is the badge of these Sodalities, is for the members an unfailing source of inspiration and strength in the pursuit of their own personal sanctification, as well as an invaluable help in their active Apostolate for the salvation of souls. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the newly-formed Legion of Mary—so active in our midst and so widespread—has incorporated the design of the Medal in its Standard, and that every Legionary is called upon to be, “as it were, a living Miraculous Medal—that is, a humble instrument of Our Lady’s graces to the world.”¹

“NEED OF MIRACLES”

Certainly the age of miracles has never passed, and the Medal can and will prove itself as truly miraculous in our day as a hundred years ago. Surely the evils and dangers of our time are no fewer than those of the proud and sceptical nineteenth century—a century so full of revolutionary ideas and social discontents. And just as surely, then, the Medal must continue its benign crusade of spiritual healing and of conquest for the kingdom of Mary’s Son. In the course of his reply to an address read to him after

¹ Handbook of the Legion.

the solemn ceremony which brought the Centenary Year of the Medal to a close on the 19th July, 1931, Pope Pius XI said: "All the world knows that the Church is at a sad and painful epoch of its history. . . . And this is when precisely in our days the Miraculous Medal comes to shine, as if to recall to us, in a sensible and tangible way, that all things, even miracles, are granted in answer to prayer; and I would say especially *miracles*. That is the magnificent and distinctive property of the Medal. . . . *We have need of miracles.*" Behold the appeal of the Pope of Catholic Action to avail of the miraculous efficacy of the Medal in defence of the rights of the Church! Therefore, let all the members of the Lay Apostolate be invested with the Miraculous Medal. Let them distribute it, preach it, exhort others to be invested with it. Let them make use of it in every way as an effective weapon for the triumph of Holy Church.

IV

THE APOSTLE OF THE MEDAL

"Lay deep in thyself the foundation of humility and thou shalt reach the summit of charity."—*Commentary on Psalm 130.*

THE above sentence, taken from the writings of St. Augustine, may serve as an admirable summary of the life of the humble Sister of Charity who was chosen by the Mother of God to be her agent in giving the Miraculous Medal to the world. Following faithfully in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul, her guide, she reached, by humility, the summit of Christian perfection and, although blessed with many extraordinary graces, lived voluntarily until her death a life hidden in God.

EARLY YEARS

Catherine Labouré was born on the 2nd May, 1806, at Fain-les-Moutiers, in the Diocese of Dijon, the ninth of eleven children, of pious and honest parents, Peter Labouré and Madeleine Gontard. At her Baptism on the following day she received the name of Catherine, a name which she kept all through her life in Community and by which she is honoured to-day on the Altars of the Church. She

was more familiarly known to her friends as Zoé. From her childhood her character was gentle, her morals pure, her soul given to the things of God.

When scarcely nine years of age she lost her mother; and then, we are told, kissing a statue of the Blessed Virgin, she placed her filial trust in Mary and dedicated herself to the Mother of God. After living two years with an aunt to whose care she had been confided, Catherine returned home, where, in spite of her youth, she took over the exacting duties of housekeeping, sparing herself no labour and applying herself to the most arduous tasks. The kitchen, the farm-yard, the dove-cot with its six to eight hundred pigeons, as well as cleaning and mending, absorbed almost all her time. When she had discharged her domestic duties she spent her spare time in exercises of piety at home or in the church. In this way she became a model for the young girls of the village, and mothers advised their daughters to follow the beautiful example of her holy life.

At twelve years of age, on the occasion of her First Holy Communion, Catherine redoubled her ardent piety. Already given to all the practices of religion and charity, she now dreamed of a more perfect life. Desirous of devoting herself to the service of God in some religious congregation of women, she soon decided in favour of the Institute of St. Vincent de

Paul, the Community of the Sisters of Charity. The cares of the home, no less than the determined opposition of her father, retarded for some time the accomplishment of this pious design, without, however, diminishing her lively trust in God, in Whom she placed all her confidence for a decision of such great importance.

LIFE IN COMMUNITY

Finally, at twenty-four years of age, to the profound joy of her heart, having secured at last the consent of her father, Catherine realised the object of her desires by being received as a Postulant by the Sisters of Charity at Châtillon-sur-Seine. On the 21st April, 1830, she entered the Seminary of the Mother House in the Rue du Bac in Paris. Her fervour here was so great that she already appeared as the perfect model of all the virtues. During her time of probation she was favoured not merely with the merciful Apparitions of the Immaculate Mother of God, as already narrated, but also with other visions. In the very first week the Heart of St. Vincent de Paul appeared to her on three successive days. She saw Our Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar on almost every day of her stay in the Seminary; on the Feast of the Blessed Trinity she beheld Him likened to a king with the cross on His breast. But she hid all these favours under the

veil of humility and silence so that no one, her confessor alone excepted, even suspected the extraordinary graces which were being bestowed on her by God.

On leaving the Seminary in January 1831, she was placed by her Superiors in the Hospice d'Enghien, situated in one of the suburbs of Paris, where she remained for the rest of her life. Very humble offices were assigned to her—in the kitchen, the linen-room, the poultry-yard. . . . Her principal duty, however, was the care of poor and aged men. For forty years, with admirable skill and imperturbable patience, she looked after them unremittingly, although they were peevish, difficult, rude, troublesome, and often ungrateful. In their last sicknesses, to their dying breath, she redoubled her kind attentions and affection, watching at their bedsides by day and night like a truly attentive mother and consoling angel.

On the 1st March, 1835, she took her vows, which she renewed every year according to the privileged practice of the Community.¹ She renewed them for the last time on the 31st December, 1876. On that day her mortal life, which had been truly hidden “with Christ in God,” came to an end.

¹ The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul make their vows for only one year. They make them again annually on the Feast of the Annunciation.

Fortified by the Last Sacraments and surrounded by her Sisters, Catherine peacefully expired, and her soul, like a white dove, winged its way to her celestial Spouse. "Never," said her Superior, "have I seen a death so peaceful and so sweet."

VIRTUES

After a death so precious in the sight of God and of men, by the very special authorisation of the Civil Powers her body was placed in the crypt under the Chapel of the House of Reuilly, to which the Hospice was attached. Her tomb was henceforth visited very frequently by numberless pilgrims, among whom were always to be seen Sisters of Charity, Children of Mary Immaculate, and especially the poor, all of whom were attracted thereto by the fame of the sanctity of Sister Catherine Labouré.

She had practised all the virtues during her lifetime with heroic constancy and fervour. Her faith was so lively that she saw all things in God and God in everything. In Him, in the merits of Christ, in the intercession of His Blessed Mother and of the Saints, she placed all her hope. Her love of God and her piety were so ardent that, in speaking of God or to Him, in receiving Our Lord sacramentally or visiting Him, and even in looking upon a statue of the Blessed Virgin, Catherine then appeared to be in ecstasy. Her admirable and heroic love for the

neighbour never shone more brilliantly than towards the poor and the old men who were entrusted to her care. Her love of poverty and contempt for the things of the world were such that at the time of her death it was almost impossible to find any personal belongings which could be given to her Sisters as souvenirs. She kept all her Rules with the greatest perfection, not merely for a day or two, but during the entire course of her Community life—a constancy and steadfastness of purpose which in itself was evidence of her heroic sanctity.

Finally, obedient to the wishes of the Blessed Virgin, she maintained for forty-six years an absolute silence as to the favours showered upon her, nor did she ever permit her name to be mentioned in connection with the Apparitions. Silence such as this was indeed an admirable proof of her fidelity and humility. While the entire Catholic world was rejoicing in the marvellous happenings with which the name of Catherine Labouré will be ever associated—the Apparitions in the Rue du Bac and at Lourdes, the Miracles of the Medal, the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception—she rigorously kept the “Secret of her Queen,” pursuing, meanwhile, the laborious and charitable life of a “Servant of the Poor.” She was obliged, however, to reveal her secret six months before her death. Realising that her end was near, she made every-

thing known to her Superior, so that the statue of the "Virgo Potens," which the Blessed Virgin had ordered her to have made in remembrance of the Apparitions, might be erected in the Chapel of the Mother House.

BEATIFICATION AND CANONISATION

The reputation for sanctity which Sister Catherine had enjoyed among her Superiors and companions during life increased from day to day after her death. Soon the necessary steps were taken to raise her to the honours of the Altar. The Canonical Process for the Introduction of her Cause was opened by the Curia of Paris in the year 1896. Pius X, deeming that this Cause was worthy of being brought before the Sacred Congregation of Rites, signed its Introduction with his own hand on the 12th December, 1907. At the conclusion of the judicial investigation by ecclesiastical tribunals into the life and actions of the Servant of God, Pius XI declared, on the 19th July, 1931, that Sister Catherine Labouré had practised the Theological and Cardinal virtues to an heroic degree. Shortly afterwards the two miracles attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Catherine were duly examined and approved. Finally, on the 12th March, 1933, the Sovereign Pontiff decided that one could in all safety proceed to her Beatification. On the 21st March there took

place the Canonical Identification and Examination of her mortal remains. When her body was exhumed, to the great joy of the bystanders, it was found to be in a state of wonderful preservation, almost without a trace of corruption, as intact as on the day of her death. It now rests in the Chapel of the Apparitions, under the Altar of the "Virgo Potens." Her heart, preserved in a magnificent crystal reliquary, remains in the Chapel of the Hospice d'Enghien. Her soul is in Heaven, enjoying the Beatific Vision and the sweet presence of Mary Immaculate. On the 28th May, 1933, Pope Pius XI decreed "that the Venerable Servant of God, Catherine Labouré, of the Community of the Sisters of Charity, be henceforth called Blessed." Fourteen years later, on the 27th July, 1947, Pope Pius XII solemnly proclaimed and defined Blessed Catherine Labouré to be a Saint.

PANEGYRIC BY PIUS XI

On the day after the solemn Ceremonies of Beatification, the Holy Father granted an audience to a group of seven thousand Children of Mary Immaculate.¹ In the course of his address to them he paid the following striking tribute to the newly Beatified:

¹ The Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate was founded at the express wish of the Blessed Virgin. It is intimately linked up with the Apparitions of the Mother of God to Saint Catherine (See Appendix).

"There is in Blessed Catherine Labouré a lesson prepared for you and for the times in which we live. It could, indeed, be said that at present all life tends to what is purely external. The times of those calm and recollected Christian lives: how far distant and remote they seem to be! And yet a little of the hidden life is necessary for the Christian life.

"The treasures which you carry: purity, dignity, modesty, Christian charity, treasures of prayers and graces, of life with God and Jesus—it is impossible to guard them without hiding them.

"Certainly the day may come when it will be necessary to display these treasures for the honour of Christ the Redeemer. But they are usually kept under lock and key. That is what Blessed Catherine Labouré tells you in her own peerless way. We do not know—perhaps there is, but We must confess Our ignorance—any more striking example of the hidden life than that of this soul, of whom everybody was speaking during her lifetime and who remained in the background, hidden with Mary and Jesus."

NOTE.—During the juridical investigation into the authenticity of the Apparitions of the Mother of God to Saint Catherine, the question was raised by the Promoter as to why a Sister of Charity should have been chosen for such a signal mission in preference to a member of a contemplative or of one of the more austere Orders in the Church. In reply, the Commission gave as its considered opinion that the Community of the Sisters

of Charity was thus favoured by Heaven because of two pious practices which it had observed from its very foundation, viz., the making each year of an act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the recitation at the conclusion of each decade of the Rosary of the following profession of faith:

"Most Holy Virgin, I believe and confess thy holy and Immaculate Conception, pure and without stain; O most chaste Virgin, through thy virginal purity, thy Immaculate Conception, thy glorious prerogative of Mother of God, obtain for me from thy Divine Son humility, charity, great purity of heart, mind and body, holy perseverance in my dear vocation, the gift of prayer, a good life and a happy death. Amen."

PART TWO
DEVOTIONAL

I. THE ASSOCIATION OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL.

Statutes.

Organisation.

Indulgences.

II. RITE OF BLESSING AND INVESTING WITH THE HOLY MEDAL.

III. REFLECTIONS ON THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL IN PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:

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„ 5th—The Stars of the Medal.

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„ 8th—Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

IV. THE PERPETUAL NOVENA IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL.

V. THE PROPER OF THE MASSES FOR:

Nov. 27th—Feast of the Miraculous Medal.

„ 28th—Feast of Saint Catherine Labouré.

Dec. 8th—Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

I

THE ASSOCIATION OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

DURING the Apparition of the 27th November, 1830, when revealing the design of the Miraculous Medal, our Blessed Lady said to Saint Catherine: "Have a medal struck according to this model. Those who wear it, when indulged, will receive great graces. . . ." In answer, it would seem, to the wish thus expressed by the Mother of God, as the devotion to the Miraculous Medal spread, an Association of the Medal in honour of the Immaculate Conception was formed in many dioceses. By a Brief of the 8th July, 1909, Pius X gave formal authorisation for the canonical erection of this Association. It is popularly known as "The Association of the Miraculous Medal."

STATUTES.

In the Brief of the above date, the following statutes were drawn up:

1. The Association of the Miraculous Medal in honour of the Immaculate Conception is established

as a living and perpetual memorial of the Manifestation of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in the year 1830, the Feast of which is celebrated annually on the 27th November, and during which the Virgin herself showed the model of this Medal: a Medal which, as soon as it had been diffused throughout the entire world, received from the people the name of *Miraculous*, by reason of the supernatural wonders which, it is said, were wrought every day through its instrumentality.

2. The Association proposes as its end to render to Mary, conceived without original sin, the honour that is her due, by means of the two-fold work of personal sanctification and the Apostolate, the model of which and the necessary aid thereto being both given by the Medal, owing to the symbol which it represents and the power which is attached to it.

3. In every diocese where the Association is canonically erected, the diocesan Directors, who are nominated by the respective Ordinaries, direct it according to its own proper spirit, laws and customs, under the authority of one Director-General.

4. By the Papal concession of the 3rd June, 1905, the Association enjoys the same Indulgences and privileges as those granted to the Association of the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is popularly known as the "Blue Scapular."

5. All the Faithful of both sexes may become members of this Association and participate in its privileges, on condition that they wear the holy Medal on the breast and suspended from the neck, after it has been blessed and put on, according to the prescribed rite, by a priest with power to this effect.

6. The principal Feast of the Association is the 27th November, the day on which the Manifestation of the Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal is commemorated.

7. The Associates, on whom no new external obligations are imposed, should endeavour to repeat very frequently the invocation engraved on the holy Medal: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!"

8. The Director-General, in perpetuity, is the Superior-General, for the time being, of the Congregation of the Mission and the Sisters of Charity.

9. By reason of the great numbers of its Associates, the Association is dispensed from the obligation of inscribing names in a Register.

ORGANISATION.

According to articles 5 and 9 of the above Statutes, it follows that *whoever wears the Medal around the neck*, after it has been blessed and put on, according to the prescribed rite, by an authorised priest, *becomes by*

that very fact a member of the Association of the Miraculous Medal, and has a right to all the rich Indulgences enumerated below. Any one, therefore, may become a member of the Association, who

- has the intention of joining the Association;
- is validly invested with the Medal;
- wears the Medal suspended around the neck.

Consequently, the Association can be easily organised in any Parish or Institution in conjunction with any other Sodality, e.g., the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, the Holy Family Confraternity, the Associations of the Children of Mary, etc. Once the respective Directors have obtained the necessary faculty, they may invest all the Members with the Miraculous Medal.¹

But if the Association be established as a distinct and separate Sodality, then formal approval for its erection should be obtained from the Bishop of the Diocese, in accordance with article 3 of the Statutes and canon 686 of the Code of Canon Law.

INDULGENCES.

The following is an abridged summary of the Indulgences which have been granted to the Association by the Holy See:

¹ For the special faculty of blessing and investing with the Miraculous Medal, application may be made to the V. Rev. Provincial, C.M., St. Peter's, Phibsborough, Dublin or the V. Rev. Director of the Sisters of Charity, St. Vincent's, Mill Hill, London, N.W.7.

(A) PLENARY (on the usual conditions):

- on the day of investment with the Medal;
- on the day of his First Mass, for the priest who wears the Medal;
- at the hour of death;
- during a Retreat, once a year;
- on the First Sunday of every month;
- on all the Saturdays of Lent;
- on Passion Sunday and the following Friday;
- on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week;
- on the Feasts of the Immaculate Conception, Nativity B.V.M., Purification, Annunciation and Assumption;
- on the principal Feasts of the Clerks Regular of the Theatine Congregation;
- on several other days, e.g., once during the “Quarante Ore,” the first and last day of a Novena in preparation for Christmas, etc., etc.—*Pius X, 1905*;
- on the following Feasts of the Congregation of the Mission, viz., Bl. Francis Clet—February 17th; Translation of the Relics

of St. Vincent de Paul—April 20th; St. Vincent de Paul—July 19th; Death of St. Vincent—September 27th; Bl. John Gabriel Perboyre—November 7th; Patronage of St. Vincent de Paul—December 20th.—*Benedict XV*, 1917.

(B) THE INDULGENCES OF THE STATIONS IN ROME,
on the days marked in the Roman Missal.
—*Pius X*, 1905.

(C) PARTIAL:

- 10 years, *every time* 6 Paters, Aves and Glorias are said, with contrite heart, for the special intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff;
- 60 years, for all who make a half-hour's Meditation;
- 20 years, for visiting the sick and assisting them spiritually or corporally; on the Octave Days of the Feasts of Our Lord; on the Feasts of the Saints of the Orders of the Hermits of St. Augustine, Most Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives, Carmelites, Dominicans and Servites;
- 7 years and 7 quarantines: on the lesser Feasts of the Blessed Virgin; every time that the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy

Eucharist are received; every Monday, for making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; etc.;

- 5 years and 5 quarantines, every time one visits a church and says 5 Paters, Aves and Glorias;
- Indulgences of many days: 300 days, each day during the Octave of Pentecost; 200 days, for being present at a sermon; 60 days, for every good work, etc.—*Pius X, 1905.*
- 300 days, *every time* the invocation: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!” is recited.—*Pius XI, 1930.*

(D) PRIVILEGED ALTAR:

All Masses which are offered on any Altar for a deceased person who wore the Medal enjoy the favour of the Privileged Altar.—*Pius X, 1905.*

By a Brief of the 30th September, 1895, the following *Plenary* Indulgences were granted for all the Faithful who wear the Medal, blessed according to the prescribed form:

- on the day on which they receive the Medal for the first time. (Conditions: Confession, Holy

Communion and prayers for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.)

—on Easter Sunday and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. (Conditions: same as above, and, in addition, a visit to any church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, or to the Parish Church.)

A *Partial Indulgence* of 100 days, once a day, may be gained by wearing the Medal and reciting with contrite heart the invocation: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!”

—*Pius X*, 1904.¹

Moreover, all the Faithful, whether they wear the Medal or not, may gain a *Plenary Indulgence*, on the usual conditions, by visiting a Church or Oratory attached to the Houses of the Vincentian Fathers or of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul on the Feast of the Miraculous Medal, November 27th, or on the evening before, and there praying for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.—*Leo XIII*, 1894.

They may also gain a *Partial Indulgence* of 300 days *every time* they recite the invocation: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!”—*Pius XI*, 1932.

¹ Every priest may bless the Miraculous Medal as he would any other object of piety; but he requires special powers to impart the blessing proper to the Medal, and to invest the Faithful with it, in order that the numerous Indulgences, enumerated above, may be gained.

PRAYER FOR GAINING INDULGENCES

My Lord and my God, I beseech Thee to grant me, in virtue of the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ, all the Indulgences attached to my prayers and actions of this day; I desire to enter into the intentions requisite for the gaining of these Indulgences, so that I may satisfy Divine Justice and help the Souls in Purgatory. Amen.

II

RITE OF BLESSING AND INVESTING WITH THE HOLY MEDAL OF THE BLESSED AND IMMACULATE VIRGIN MARY (popularly known as the Miraculous Medal) S.R.C., April 19th, 1895

THE Priest, vested in surplice and white stole, blesses the holy Medal of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary as follows:

- V. Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.
R. Qui fecit cœlum et terram.
V. Dominus vobiscum.
R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

OREMUS

Omnipotens et misericors Deus, qui per multiplices immaculatæ Mariæ Virginis apparitiones in terris mirabilia jugiter pro animarum salute operari dignatus es: super hoc numismatis signum, tuam bene~~X~~dictionem benignus infunde; ut pie hoc recolentes ac devote gestantes et illius patrocinium sentiant et tuam misericordiam consequantur. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

R. Amen.

He then sprinkles the Medal with holy water, and while investing with it says:

If for one person only,

Accipe sanctum Numisma, gesta fideliter, et digna veneratione prosequere: ut piissima et immaculata cœlorum Domina te protegat atque defendat; et pietatis suæ prodigia renovans, quæ a Deo suppliciter postulaveris, tibi misericorditer impetret, ut vivens ac moriens in materno ejus amplexu feliciter requiescas. Amen.

If for several,

Accipite sanctum Numisma, gestate fideliter, et digna veneratione prosequimini: ut piissima et immaculata cœlorum Domina vos protegat atque defendat; et pietatis suæ prodigia renovans, quæ a Deo suppliciter postulaveritis, vobis misericorditer impetret, ut viventes ac morientes in materno ejus amplexu feliciter requiescatis. Amen.

He then continues:

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Pater noster . . . *secretly as far as*

V. Et ne nos inducas in temptationem.

R. Sed libera nos a malo.

V. Regina sine labe originali concepta.

R. Ora pro nobis.

V. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

V. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

OREMUS

Domine Jesu Christe, qui beatissimam Virginem Mariam matrem tuam ab origine immaculatam innumeris miraculis clarescere voluisti: concede; ut ejusdem patrocinium semper implorantes, gaudia consequamur æterna: Qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum.

R. Amen.

NOTE.—If many people are to be invested with the Medal at the same time, then they themselves may put on the Medal, the priest saying the prescribed form in the plural number (as above).—S.R.C.

III

REFLECTIONS ON THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL IN PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

THE solemn definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady was made by Pope Pius IX in the year 1854. Not yet had the Apparitions of Lourdes taken place; they were not to be until four years later. But twenty-four years before the definition, in 1830, the Blessed Virgin had manifested herself to the humble Catherine Labouré, and had commanded her to have made a Medal that was to proclaim the Immaculate Conception. The Medal was struck according to Our Lady's own design; it bore her own words: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!"; it was distributed throughout the world in almost countless millions; it wrought innumerable miracles. Surely the Miraculous Medal was the means chosen by the Mother of God for evoking in a special way that universal and un-

mistakable cry of loving devotion to her Immaculate Conception, which Pius IX regarded as final proof of God's Will that he should solemnly define the Dogma.

The two great Feasts are close to each other: that of the Manifestation of the Miraculous Medal on the 27th November; that of the Immaculate Conception on the 8th December. The essential meaning of each Feast is the same. The following short reflections on the Miraculous Medal thus cover a period of special devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and may therefore serve as a fitting preparation for the greatest of her Feasts.

(1)

November 27th

FEAST OF THE MANIFESTATION OF THE BLESSED AND
IMMACULATE VIRGIN MARY OF THE MIRACULOUS
MEDAL

Apparition of Mary Immaculate:

On the 27th November, 1830, the Blessed Virgin manifested herself to Sister Catherine Labouré, a young novice, in the Chapel of the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris. She revealed to her the design, now so well known, of the Miraculous Medal.

"Have a medal struck," she said, "according to

this model. Those who wear it will receive great graces. . . . There will be graces in abundance for all who wear it with confidence." (See p. 16.)

—*Have I ever fully thought on or appreciated the truth and reality of this Apparition?*

—*Have I ever thanked Mary Immaculate for this gracious act of love and mercy?*

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(2)

November 28th

FEAST OF SAINT CATHERINE LABOURÉ

The Agent of Mary Immaculate:

God loves to make use for the accomplishment of His designs, not of the great and powerful, but of what is weak and despicable in the eyes of this world; thus He shows that all true and lasting success comes from Him alone, and the very weakness of the creature is made to glorify His power and wisdom.

Thus we find that when God wishes to unfold His secrets, He usually chooses as His confidants the humble, the poor, often the unlettered, sometimes mere children. Such persons were Agatha, Agnes, Lucy, Cecilia, the early virgin-martyrs; such, at a later period, and in our own time, were St. Catherine of Siena, St. Joan of Arc, St. Margaret Mary, St. Bernadette, St. Therèse of Lisieux.

So it was, too, when the Miraculous Medal was manifested. God selected, through the medium of Mary, an uneducated, almost illiterate little novice, a peasant girl. As Catherine herself said on one occasion: "The Blessed Virgin made use of me so as to leave no one in doubt."

All through her life, Saint Catherine hid herself beneath the mantle of humility. She preserved the most strict and rigid silence about the great favours she had received; a silence which, at the time of her Beatification, merited the tribute of admiration which Pius XI offered in the name of the Church: "She kept the secret of her Queen." Is not this testimony of the Holy Father the most perfect and beautiful that could be rendered to Saint Catherine?

- Does the Blessed Virgin find in me any of those virtues which she loved so much in her trusted agent?*
- Am I humble; or do I try to become humble? Do I control my tongue? Do I keep silent when speech would be injurious to my neighbour?*

Saint Catherine Labouré, pray for us!

(3)

November 29th

The Design of the Medal:

The design, like the Medal itself, has come from Heaven. It is not the human work of an artist, how-

ever clever; nor a composition, however ingenious; nor even the expression of piety, however ardent. It is the direct personal gift of the Mother of God. It was she herself who showed to Saint Catherine the model according to which the Medal was to be struck.

On the face of the Medal is the figure of Mary Immaculate encircled by the invocation: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!" On the reverse of the Medal is the letter "M," surmounted by a cross with a bar beneath; under the letter are two hearts—the Heart of Jesus surrounded by a crown of thorns, and the Heart of Mary pierced by a sword; the whole is enframed by an oval of twelve stars.

The Introit of the Mass for the Feast recalls the heavenly origin and purpose of the Medal: "It shall be as a sign in thy hand, and as a memorial before thy eyes." (Exod. xiii, 9.) Let me meditate on these words—so aptly chosen from Sacred Scripture.

'A sign in thy hand'; that is, a contract, a declaration, a testimony of belonging wholly to Mary Immaculate.

"A memorial before thy eyes"; that is, the Medal sets before me a model, an example which I must study and reproduce in myself.

- Have I understood sufficiently the value of the Medal?*
- Do I frequently thank the Mother of God for her most precious gift?*

O Mary, conceived without sin, mayest thou be ever blessed for thy gift to us of this great treasure of the Miraculous Medal; pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(4)

November 30th

The Prayer of the Medal:

"O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!"

Such is the prayer taught by Mary Immaculate herself. Translated into all languages, repeated incessantly by human lips in every part of the world, this short invocation has kindled in the minds and hearts of all who have repeated it true belief in and devotion towards the Immaculate Conception of God's Mother.

The prayer is at once an invocation and an act of Faith. It expresses at the same time our great needs and our complete confidence in our Mother so privileged. It was she who composed it for our special use. Thus we are sure that it is most pleasing to her, and will infallibly move her to obtain for us countless graces from her Son.

Let us remember, too, that it is an indulgenced prayer.¹ We must never tire of repeating it. We must teach it to others—children, the sick, the fallen,

¹ 300 days, each time. Plenary, once a month if recited daily.

people in trouble . . . indeed, to everyone with whom we have personal contact and intimacy.

May this prayer be impressed upon my mind and heart.

—*Have I sufficiently esteemed the invocation on the Medal?*

—*Do these holy words spring spontaneously to my lips, especially when I am in some great need, spiritual or temporal?*

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(5)

December 1st

The "M" of the Medal:

MARY—MOTHER—MEDIATRIX. What sublime and beautiful titles! “There stood by the cross of Jesus, *Mary His Mother.*” (John xix, 25.) Mary is inseparable from Jesus; both must be thought of together. How perfectly this union is proclaimed on the Medal! Thereon we see how the monogram of Mary forms, as it were, a support and pedestal for the Cross of Jesus. And beneath are the two Holy Hearts side by side.

My life, to be truly Christian, must be united to the life of our Blessed Lord. But such a union must include the Mother. He wished and ordained this when, dying on the Cross, He said: “Behold thy Mother!” And so the Mother of Jesus is my

Mother also. She must be as inseparable from my life as she is from Him. Her holy name, like His, must be engraved on my heart, always present in my mind, ever ready on my lips.

Furthermore, Mary is the Mediatrix of all God's graces; they all flow to us through her. Thus, on the face of the Medal we behold her declaring to us this great office. She appears there with her hands extended, sending forth brilliant rays, which symbolize, in her own words to Saint Catherine, the favours she is ready to bestow on all who ask her for them.

—Is it in this manner that I have thought of Mary?

Have I made her an intimate part of my entire life?

—Do I give her my first confidences in joy as well as in sorrow?

—Do I make it my habit to go to Jesus through Mary?

O Mary, conceived without sin, lead me to Jesus;
pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(6)

December 2nd

The Cross of the Medal:

The holy Cross of Christ is the highest and most complete symbol of Christianity. It is the memorial of our Redemption, the abridgment of the Christian life. It is this Cross which surmounts the monogram of Mary.

The only road to Heaven is the way of the Cross; herein is all salvation.

The Blessed Virgin shared the Cross with Jesus. His Passion was also hers, and with what bitter sorrows it was filled! *Stabat Mater dolorosa*. Sorrowing she stood beside the Cross of her Son. On the Medal she presents the Cross to us together with the two suffering Hearts. Thus she repeats to us the highest truth of the Christian life whilst assuring us of her help in following it.

—*In my sorrows, trials, difficulties, falls, do I go to my Immaculate Mother Mary? Do I throw myself like a little child into her maternal hands?*

—*Do I have recourse to her in all sufferings of soul and body?*

O Mary, conceived without sin, teach me to suffer bravely; pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(7)

December 3rd

The Two Hearts of the Medal:

Close to the Heart of Jesus, surrounded by a crown of thorns, we behold the Heart of Mary pierced by a sword. For in love and in suffering these two Holy Hearts are inseparable.

As the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the model of all holiness, the source of all graces, so the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the faithful mirror of all the Divine

Perfections. It is also the channel through which all grace is poured into the world.

The place of the Mother must ever be by the side of the Son. Such is the eternal design of Providence, which it is impossible to alter.

Furthermore, Jesus has identified Mary with the Redemption of mankind; so closely, indeed, that she has been spoken of as the co-Redemptrix.

The eternal Father has given His beloved Son to the world through Mary. To my soul, also, He sends Jesus through Mary.

—Do I faithfully honour and console the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the First Friday of the month?

—Am I faithful, too, in honouring and consoling the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the First Saturday of the month?¹

O Mary, conceived without sin, unite me by thy most pure Heart to the Divine Heart of Jesus; pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(8)

December 4th

The Rays of the Medal:

Saint Catherine spoke of these rays in a special way. Let us listen to what she tells us:

“Suddenly her fingers were covered with rings

¹ A Plenary Indulgence may be gained on each of these days, on the usual conditions.

inset with precious stones; rays of dazzling light darted from them on all sides and enveloped her figure with such brilliance that I could no longer see either her feet or her robe. The precious stones varied in size and the rays which came forth from them in brilliance. . . .

"And the Blessed Virgin added: 'Behold the symbol of the graces which I will shower down on all who ask me for them!'"

Saint Catherine observed with astonishment that some of the precious stones emitted no rays at all. Our Lady explained to her that "these stones are symbolic of the graces for which people forget to ask me."

—*Have I ever tried to understand fully the treasures of grace which Mary Immaculate holds in reserve for my soul?*

—*Do I ever think of begging and imploring them for myself and others, especially for those who forget to ask for them?*

O Mary, conceived without sin, do not permit me to deprive myself through neglect or indifference of the graces which thou dost wish to obtain for me; pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(9)

December 5th

The Stars of the Medal:

The design on the reverse of the Medal is enclosed

by an oval of twelve stars. These stars are symbolic; they represent the Twelve Apostles, the faithful companions and followers of the Word Incarnate, and who were destined to glorify Him by their preaching, their sanctity and their glorious martyrdom.

Mary, Mother of God, was intimately associated with the Apostles. Has she not been honoured with the title of "Queen of Apostles"?

The presence of the stars on the Medal reminds us of one of our chief obligations as Christians. We, too, must be apostles—by the example of holy lives, by our words, by our zeal for God's glory whenever the occasion arises for us. We must help to lead souls to Jesus through Mary; not only the souls of lukewarm or lapsed Catholics, but even of those who have never received the priceless gift of the Faith. "They that instruct many unto justice shall shine as stars for all eternity." (Dan. xii, 3.)

And so we behold in Mary's Medal a sign of and a call to the Apostolate. Is it not, in truth, the Medal of Catholic Action? We know what innumerable conquests of souls for Christ have been made through the instrumentality of the Medal, what victories over the Powers of Evil.

—*Have I tried to learn this lesson of the Medal? Am I sufficiently aware of the obligation to be an apostle which my Christianity imposes on me? If I am a*

devout client of Mary, I must surely burn with zeal for the interests of her Son.

—*Have I ever rightly understood that I am in some degree responsible for the souls who surround me—the souls of my friends, my workmates . . . ?*

O Mary, conceived without sin, help me to work for the salvation of souls; make me thirst for the souls whom thy Son has redeemed; pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(10)

December 6th

The Lesson of the Medal:

The Miraculous Medal presents to us, if we regard it rightly, a wonderful epitome of our holy religion; it is a sort of divine miniature which lacks no essential feature.

For it may be said in truth that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which the Medal recalls, is a summary—at least implicitly—of the principal truths of Religion: from the fall of man by original sin to his Redemption and sanctification; the universal Motherhood of Mary; her exalted mission as Mediatrix of all Graces—as commemorated in the recently established Feast of May 31st.

On the face of the Medal, Mary appears all beautiful and fair, her hands emitting countless rays of light which are, in her own words, symbolic of

the graces she will shower down on all who ask for them. And she tells us how to ask, giving us the prayer composed by herself: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!"

The reverse of the Medal symbolizes for us the foundations on which all our prayers should be based: *charity, penance, mortification*; of these we are reminded by the Cross and the two suffering Hearts. The stars represent *zeal* and *apostleship*. Here there is no inscription, for, as our Blessed Lady said: "The Cross and the two Hearts say enough to the Christian soul."

—Is my faith sufficiently enlightened? Do I really see on the Medal a summary of the Christianity which I profess?

O Mary, conceived without sin, preserve and increase my faith; pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(11)

December 7th

Our Duties in regard to the Medal:

To thank Mary Immaculate for having given us this most precious gift.

To wear the Medal in the manner she has asked, that is "around the neck," after receiving it from the hands of a priest duly empowered to bless and distribute it. All this is necessary in order to gain

the many Indulgences with which the Medal has been enriched by the Holy See.

To propagate it everywhere—in our homes and those of our friends and relations, in our places of work, in our travels and social contacts. . . . It is usually received with reverence and gratitude.

To join the Crusade of the Miraculous Medal. It is open to everyone, for the Medal is Mary's gift to all mankind without exception.¹

—*Do I always wear the Miraculous Medal? Am I really desirous of propagating its use and devotion?*

—*Am I a Crusader of the Miraculous Medal?*

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for me that I may always faithfully fulfil my duties to thy Medal; pray for us who have recourse to thee!

(12)

December 8th

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

“We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine according to which, by the special grace and privilege of Almighty God and in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the human race, the Blessed Virgin Mary was in the first instant of her Conception preserved from all stain of original sin, is revealed by God, and must, therefore, be firmly and constantly believed by all the Faithful.”

¹ For particulars apply to the “Virgo Potens” Office, North William Street, Dublin.

It was the Miraculous Medal which prepared the way for, and was largely instrumental in evoking, this infallible definition of Mary's most cherished privilege. The great dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God was proclaimed solemnly by Pius IX on the 8th December, 1854—that is twenty-four years after the Apparitions of the Immaculate Virgin to Saint Catherine Labouré.

"I am the Immaculate Conception." These are the words which, four years later, were spoken by Mary herself to St. Bernadette at Lourdes. On the occasion of that Apparition, little Bernadette was wearing a Miraculous Medal. For, by that time, that holy Medal, which the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul had been zealously distributing since 1832, was known and revered throughout the world. Everywhere the Faithful were familiar with the image of Mary Immaculate standing upon the globe, crushing beneath her feet the serpent's head. In almost every known tongue was breathed her own prayer: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!"

Is not Lourdes the expression of Mary's thanks and loving appreciation to her children on earth for their faith in and devotion to her Immaculate Conception?

—*Have I, for my part, rightly understood the important part which the Miraculous Medal took in the definition*

*of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God
as a Dogma of Catholic Faith?*

O Mary, conceived without sin, increase my faith
in thy Immaculate Conception; enliven my devotion
to it; pray for us who have recourse to thee!

IV

THE PERPETUAL NOVENA IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

Opening Prayer

Priest. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

People. Amen.

Priest. Come, O Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of the faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created.

People. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

Priest. O God, Who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People. Amen.

Priest. O Mary, conceived without sin,

People. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.
(3 times).

Prayer

Priest and People. Most Holy Virgin, I believe and confess thy holy and Immaculate Conception, pure and without stain. O most pure Virgin, through thy

virginal purity, thy Immaculate Conception, thy glorious prerogative of Mother of God, obtain for us from thy Divine Son humility, charity, great purity of mind and body, the gift of prayer, a holy life, and a happy death. Amen.

or

Priest and People. O Lord Jesus Christ, Who has vouchsafed to glorify by numberless miracles the Blessed Virgin Mary, Immaculate from the first moment of her Conception, grant that all who devoutly implore her protection on earth may eternally enjoy Thy presence in heaven. Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who for the accomplishment of Thy greatest works hast chosen the weak things of the world, that no flesh may glory in Thy sight; and Who, for a better and more widely diffused belief in the Immaculate Conception of Thy Mother, hast wished that the Miraculous Medal be manifested to Saint Catherine Labouré, grant, we beseech Thee, that filled with like humility we may glorify this mystery by word and work. Amen.

Memorare

Priest and People. Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence, we fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, our Mother. To thee we come; before thee we kneel, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in thy clemency hear and answer them. Amen.

*Priest and People.*¹ O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of mercy, Refuge of sinners, who by a wondrous revelation to Saint Catherine didst promise that all who confidently wear the Miraculous Medal, properly blessed, and come to thy altar, repeating the prayer: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!" would receive abundant graces, we, poor sinners, encouraged by thy promises, come with the utmost confidence to implore thy powerful intercession. Amen.

Novena Prayer

Priest and People. O Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Mother, penetrated with the most lively confidence in thine all-powerful and never failing intercession, manifested so often through the Miraculous Medal, we, thy loving and trustful children, implore thee to obtain for us the graces and favours we ask during this Novena, if they be beneficial to our immortal souls and the souls for whom we pray: (*Here privately mention your Petitions.*) Thou knowest, O Mary, how often our souls have been the sanctuaries of thy Son

¹ This prayer is optional and may be omitted.

Who hates iniquity. Obtain for us then a deep hatred of sin and that purity of heart which will attach us to God alone, so that our every thought, word and deed may tend to His greater glory. Obtain for us also a spirit of prayer and self-denial that we may recover by penance what we have lost by sin and at length attain to that blessed abode where thou art the Queen of angels and of men. Amen.

An Act of Consecration to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

Priest and People. O Virgin Mother of God, Mary Immaculate, we dedicate and consecrate ourselves to thee under the title of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. May this Medal be for each one of us a sure sign of thine affection for us and a constant reminder of our duties towards thee. Ever while wearing it, may we be blessed by thy loving protection and preserved in the grace of thy Son. O Virgin Most Powerful, Mother of our Saviour, keep us close to thee every moment of our lives. Obtain for us, thy children, the grace of a happy death; so that, in union with thee, we may enjoy the bliss of heaven forever. Amen.

Priest. O Mary, conceived without sin.

People. Pray for us who have recourse to thee!
(3 times).

To be followed by a short sermon, investing with the Medal, and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

V

THE PROPER OF THE MASSES
FOR THE FEASTS OF
(I)

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE BLESSED AND
IMMACULATE VIRGIN MARY OF THE MIRACULOUS
MEDAL

(November 27th)

Introit.—Exod. xiii, 9; Ps. civ, 1

It shall be as a sign in thy hand, and as a memorial
before thy eyes: and that the law of the Lord be
always in thy mouth.

Ps. Give glory to the Lord, and call upon His
Name: declare His deeds among the Gentiles.

V. Glory be to the Father. . . .

It shall be as a sign in thy hand, and as a memorial
before thy eyes: and that the law of the Lord be
always in thy mouth.

Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst wish that the
Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, immaculate
in her Conception, be glorified by numberless
miracles; grant: that while always imploring her
protection, we may secure everlasting joy. Who

livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

Epistle.—Apoc. xii, 1-16

And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. . . . And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with an iron rod. And her son was taken up to God and to his throne. . . . And there were given to the woman two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the desert, unto her place. . . . And the serpent cast out of his mouth, after the woman, water, as it were a river: that he might cause her to be carried away by the river. And the earth helped the woman: and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Gradual.—Ps. civ, 18

Remember his marvellous works which he hath done: his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.

V. He gave them power to shew his signs and his wonders in the land.

Alleluia, Alleluia. His going out is from the end of heaven: and there is no one that can hide himself from his heat. Alleluia.

Gospel.—St. John ii, 2-11

At that time: There was a marriage in Cana of

Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: What is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water: the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him.

Offertory.—St. John xix, 27

Jesus saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.

Secret

Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin

Mary, at whose request Jesus Christ Thy Son didst work the first of His miracles; grant us, O Lord God: so to offer, with purity of heart, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of this Thy same Son, that we may be made partakers of the eternal banquet. Through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

Preface

Same as on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception B.V.M. (p. 106).

Communion.—Eccl. xxxvi, 6-10

Renew thy signs, and work new miracles, glorify thy hand and thy right arm. Hasten the time and remember the end, that they may declare thy wonderful works.

Postcommunion

O Lord God Almighty, Who didst wish us to have all things through the Immaculate Mother of Thy Son; grant: that, by the aid of so powerful a Mother, we may escape the dangers of the present time, so as to obtain life everlasting. Through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

(2)

SAINT CATHERINE LABOURÉ
 (November 28th)

Introit.—Ps. xliv

Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity:
 therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with
 the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Ps. My heart hath uttered a good word: I speak
 my works to the king.

V. Glory be to the Father. . . .

Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity:
 therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with
 the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst deign to rejoice
 Blessed Catherine, Thy Virgin, with the wonderful
 manifestation of Thine Immaculate Mother; grant,
 we beseech Thee: that by imitating her in devoutly
 honouring Thy Most Blessed Mother, we may
 obtain everlasting joy. Who livest and reignest with
 God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God,
 world without end. Amen.

Epistle.—II Cor. x, 17—xi, 2

Brethren: He that glorieth, let him glory in the
 Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is
 approved, but he whom God commendeth. Would
 to God you could bear with some little of my folly,

but do bear with me. For I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God. For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Gradual.—Ps. xliv

With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out:
proceed prosperously and reign.

V. Because of truth and meekness and justice:
and thy right hand shall conduct thee wonderfully.

Alleluia, Alleluia. *V.* After her shall virgins be
brought to the king: her neighbours shall be brought
to thee with gladness. Alleluia.

Gospel.—St. Matthew xxv, 1-13

At that time: Jesus spoke to His disciples this parable: The kingdom of Heaven shall be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish and five wise; but the five foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept; and at midnight there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps: and the foolish said to the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: Lest perhaps there be not enough

for us and for you, go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now whilst they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut; but at last came also the other virgins saying: Lord, Lord, open to us; but he answering, said: Amen I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.

Offertory.—Ps. xliv

The daughters of kings in thy honour: the queen stood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety.

Secret

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that the holy prayer of Blessed Catherine, Thy Virgin, may render our Sacrifice pleasing to Thee; so that Thou mayest deign to accept it through the merits of her in whose honour it is solemnly offered. Through Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

Communion.—St. Matthew xxv

The five wise virgins took oil in their vessels with the lamps: and at midnight there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Christ Our Lord.

Postcommunion

Have pity, O Lord, on thy servants: so that being ineffably consoled by the Sacred Mysteries, we may labour hard, by the example of Blessed Catherine, to lead a truly heavenly life. Through Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

(3)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
(December 8th)

Introit.—Is. lxi, 10; Ps. cxliv

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and with the robe of justice he hath covered me, as a bride adorned with her jewels.

Ps. I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast upheld me: and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me.

V. Glory be to the Father. . . .

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and with the robe of justice he hath covered me, as a bride adorned with her jewels.

Collect

O God, Who by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin didst prepare a worthy dwelling-place for Thy Son: we beseech Thee: that, as by the foreseen death of this Thy Son Thou didst preserve her from all stain, so, too, Thou wouldest permit us, purified through her intercession, to come unto Thee. Through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

Epistle.—Prov. viii, 22-35

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made anything. I was set up from all eternity, and of old, before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived: neither had the fountains of water as yet sprung out; the mountains with their huge bulk had not as yet been established: before the hills I was brought forth. He had not yet made the earth, nor the rivers, nor the poles of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was present; when with a certain law and compass he enclosed the depths: when he established the sky above, and poised the foundations of waters; when he compassed the sea with its bounds, and set a law to the waters that they should not pass their limits; when he balanced the foundations of the earth; I was with him, forming

all things, playing in the world: and my delights were to be with the children of men. Now, therefore, ye children, hear me: Blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors. He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.

Gradual.—Jud. xiii; Cant. iv

Blessed art thou, O Virgin Mary, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth.

V. Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people.

Alleluia, Alleluia. *V.* Thou art all fair, and there is in thee no stain of original sin. Alleluia.

Gospel.—St. Luke i, 26-28

At that time: The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the Virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Offertory.—St. Luke i, 28

Hail, Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Alleluia.

Secret

Receive, O Lord, Thy saving Victim which we offer to Thee on the Festival of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and grant: that, even as we confess her to have been preserved by Thy grace from every stain, so we may be delivered, through her intercession, from all our offences. Through Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

Preface

It is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation, that we should at all times and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God: and that we should praise, bless, and proclaim Thee, in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin: for she conceived Thine only-begotten Son by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and, while the glory of her Virginity remained, brought forth to the world the Eternal Light, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Through whom the Angels praise Thy Majesty, the Dominations adore it, the Powers stand in awe. The heavens and the heavenly hosts together with the blessed Seraphim in triumphant chorus unite to celebrate it. Together with whom we entreat Thee that Thou mayest bid our voices also say, with lowly praise:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Communion

Glorious things are told of thee, O Mary, for He Who is mighty hath done great things to thee.

Postcommunion

May the Sacraments which we have received, O Lord Our God, heal in us the wounds of that sin, from which Thou didst alone preserve the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Mary. Through Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

APPENDIX

THE ASSOCIATION OF THE CHILDREN OF MARY IMMACULATE (of the Miraculous Medal)

DURING the Apparition which took place on the night of the 18th-19th July, 1830, the Blessed Virgin expressed a formal wish for the foundation of the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate. She entrusted Saint Catherine Labouré with the mission of informing Father Aladel that he was to be the founder and director of this new foundation.

The Association received the formal approbation of Pope Pius IX on the 20th June, 1847. Membership, which was at first restricted exclusively to young girls in the Schools and Institutions under the care of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, was opened in course of time to all frequenting the Houses of the Sisters and to pupils in Colleges under the management of the Vincentian Fathers. On the 25th March, 1931, in memory of the Centenary of the Miraculous Medal, Pope Pius XI authorised the erection of the Association in every Parish or

Institution where the Parish Priest or Chaplain so desired.

Provincials of the Congregation of the Mission, as delegates of the Superior-General, have authority to sub-delegate priests to erect canonically, with the approval of the Ordinary, associations of the Children of Mary Immaculate in Parishes or Institutions committed to their care.¹

The Association, "while envisaging an *Apostleship of personal integrity and sanctity*, practises also an *Apostleship of penetration and conquest*. Having received numerous favours from Rome, it has bound itself to keep always in close touch with the Catholic Hierarchy. At the Marian Congress of 1930, the Association confirmed its resolution to spread its activity more and more in the *Parish*—the initial cell of Catholic life, to interest itself in the general movement of Catholic Action, and to adhere to the unions and organisations established in a great number of Dioceses."

The end of the Association is to foster and promote devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Its badge is the Miraculous Medal. The principal and patronal Feast of the Association is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

¹ In Great Britain and Ireland, application should be made to the Very Rev. Provincial, C.M., St. Peter's, Phibsborough, Dublin.

Details concerning the organisation of the Association, etc., are to be found in the official Manual.¹

"Saint Catherine Labouré was entrusted with a mission of forming a pious Association of Children of Mary for the safeguard and sanctification of young girls. . . . Without any delay she set about its fulfilment. . . . Just a hundred years ago last month, Our predecessor Pius IX, of saintly memory, ratified its birth certificate by the rescript of the 20th June, 1847, conferring on it canonical erection and granting to it the same Indulgences as those then enjoyed by Marian Congregations. . . . Since then what developments have taken place! Who will number the holy phalanxes of Children of Mary with veil white as the lily and whose name alone appears to bring with it a fresh breeze thoroughly impregnated with the odour of purity and piety?"—*Pope Pius XII.*²

¹ *Manual of the Children of Mary Immaculate.* Translated and adapted from the French by a Vincentian Father. Published by The Sisters of Charity, North William Street, Dublin.

² From an address given during a public audience granted on the occasion of the Canonisation of Saint Catherine Labouré—July 1947.

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